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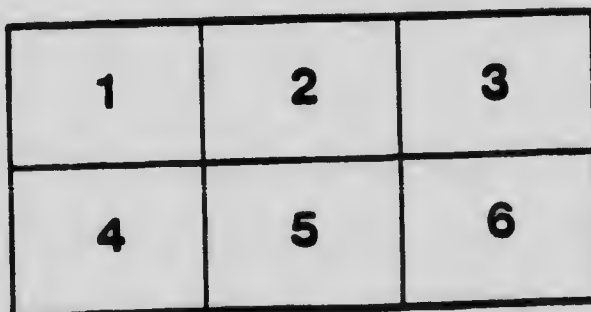
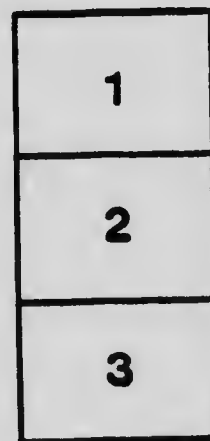
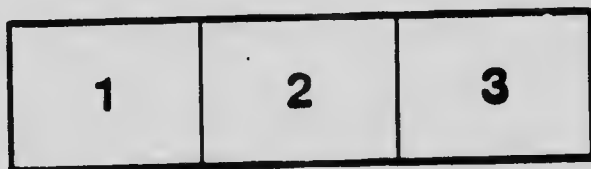
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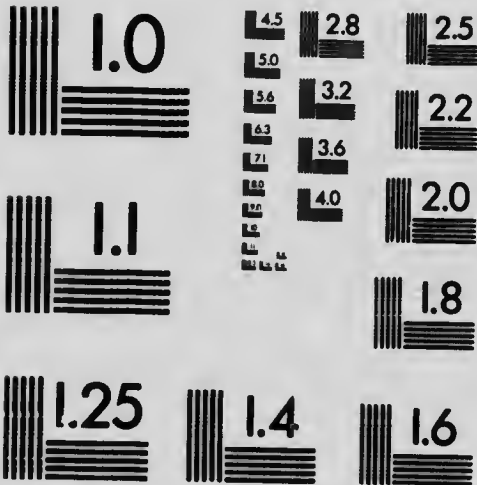
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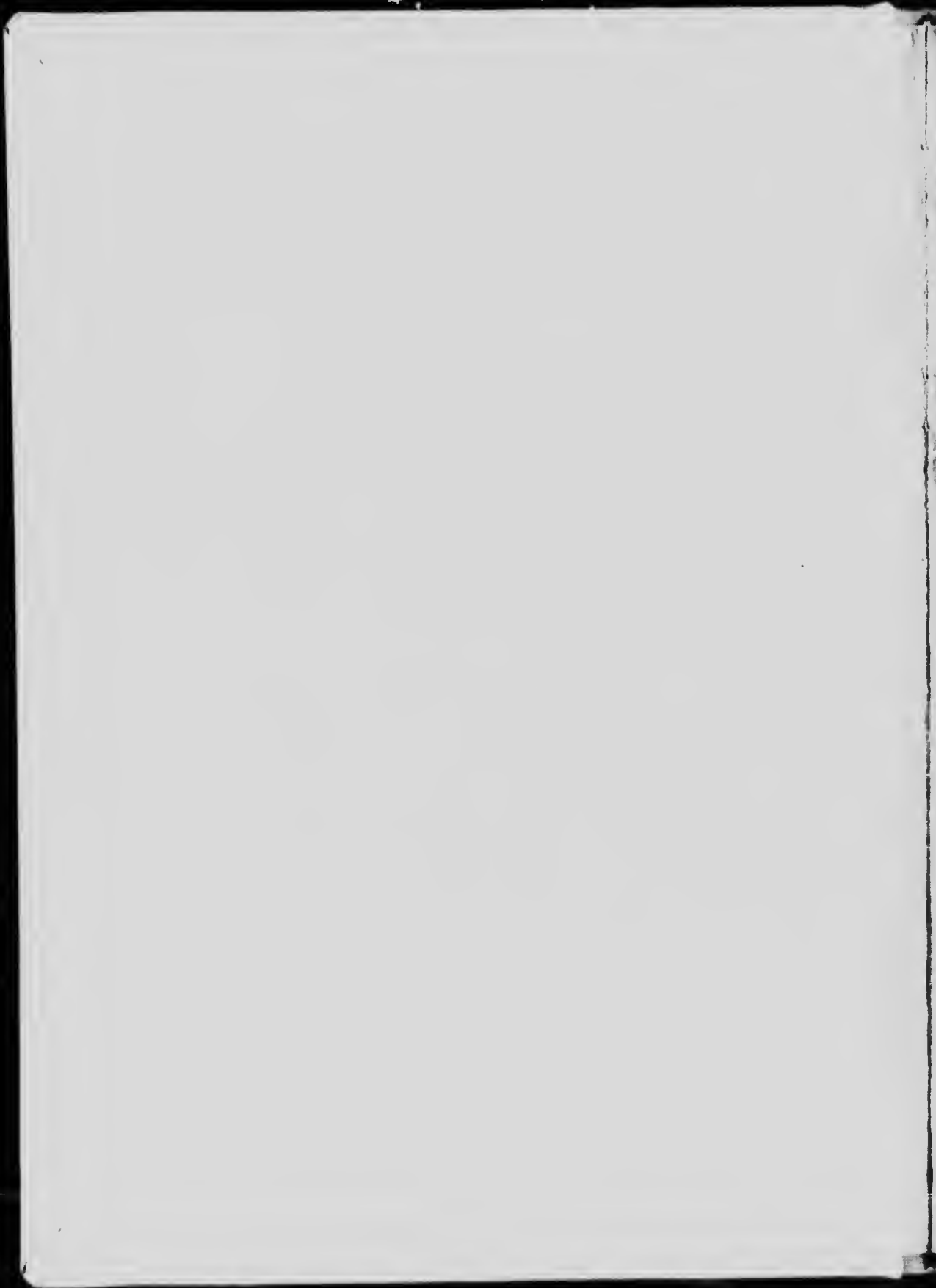
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The Two Ways

A SERMON

BY

REV. D. MACLEAN



30 Great George St.
Charlottetown, P. E. Island
Sept. 13th, 1916



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SEPT. 13TH, 1916



“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in ther at;

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and fewe there be that find it.”

—Matt. 7: 13-14.

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The Two Ways

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—Matt. 7: 13-14.

Our subject is a portion of Christ's Sermon upon the Mount. He spoke with such power and earnestness as astonished His hearers, and so different from the Scribes and Pharisees, whose discourses were dry, feeble and uninteresting.

We have here set before us the way of life and the way of death; a wide gate and a broad way, leading to eternal ruin, and a strait gate and a narrow way, leading to everlasting happiness.

We were born with sinful dispositions, and hence by nature on the broad way. While this is so, it is clear that our subject refers only to the time when we can choose for ourselves, when we can discern good from evil, and have become accountable for our actions. It is possible for all who have the means of grace, and attend to them, to forsake the broad way and come into the narrow way. We must make our choice. We cannot travel on both ways, no more than we can serve two masters. Those who look for salvation must take heed to their ways, and must attend to religion, forsake the sinful ways of the world, and attain to the way of wisdom and holiness.

May the Lord grant us the aid of His Holy Spirit in the study of His Blessed Word.

Our divisions are as follows :

I—The wide gate and broad way.

II—The strait gate and narrow way.

III—The end of both ways.

I.—The Wide Gate and Broad Way

While it is certain that all mankind are born on the broad way, our subject refers only to the time when we are able to make our choice. We must choose one or other of these ways. All who hear the Gospel will be inexcusable if they continue in the sinful ways of the world. There can be no valid excuse for continuance in sin. Some, indeed, may be ingenious enough to advance a plausible excuse; but no excuse can be made that will take away sin, or make the unpardoned sinner acceptable to God. Such as persevere on the broad way make a continual choice of it. They had made their entrance when they became conscious of sinning, and yet would not turn from it, though conscience and the Word of God testified against the sin, and Godly men exhorted them to repent, seek the Lord, and walk in His ways. Men are attracted to the broad way because it is agreeable to fallen human nature, and everything in it pleases the carnal mind; and men can be at ease and enjoy their sinful pleasures, which are for a season. They think themselves happy, because they can live at large without any concern for their souls and the eternal future. They live but for the present and for the world, and make the world their God.

Then the entrance is easy, and no effort necessary to enter, no conditions imposed, and no qualifications required. The natural man has all that qualifies him for both the gate and the way. The sinner may take the worldly ways with him, and the gate is easily seen, and is what the graceless desire. This way lays no restraint on any lust, passion, or appetite. All upon it may walk after the imagination of their hearts and the sight of their eyes, may have plenty of fun and merriment of all kinds, with conversation often frivolous and profane, the tongue being not bridled, nor any lust or passion restrained. There

is nothing perhaps that indicates a man's character more than his conversation. What pleases us we will talk about; the conversation of the righteous is of Heavenly things. The spiritually minded will speak of Christ and His precious words and doings. For such things the worldlings have no relish; they prefer an idle story, the news of the day, anything but spiritual and holy conversation. They are so enticed with the world that it has become all their desire and all they hope for, and they think they can never get enough of it.

Then the company upon the broad way is numerous; the crowd travels on it, and they encourage one another in the way, and so keep one another in countenance. The society of the world pleases the graceless. Sinful revelry is the occasion of sinful mirth, and leads farther and farther away from God. Sin is contagious, and one leads another into it. The longer one is on this way, the more he likes it and the more tenaciously he clings to it. Let us forget sorrow is their motto: into the dance once more; we'll have a jolly good time. We are not against sinless amusements by any means; but there are sports that kill, and amusements that demoralize. Against these every Christian must raise his voice and use his influence. If we do not speak against evil, we encourage it and become partakers of the sins of others.

Though the world of the graceless seems fair and flowery, it is full of evil. "Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in strife and envy."—Roms. 13: 13. This is a picture of the world and its awful ways. The world is full of envy and strife, striving to be the first and the grandest. Men in society strive for the highest place and the greatest honor. They envy and hate one another. Brotherly love is not among them, though they may be plaus-

ible to one another, and speak smooth and pleasing words, and smile at each other, yet in their heart they have ill will and often spite. But with reference to the broad way, they love it and continue in it. A fashionable lady of the world related her dream as follows: "In my sleep I thought that I was in my dining room, with a large party of friends, when a most frightful figure appeared at the window, and seemed as if he wanted to get in. I asked what it was, and being told it was death, I was exceedingly alarmed, and begged that they would keep him out; but in spite of all their efforts he forced his way in, and pointed his dart at me. I prayed earnestly that he would go away and not hurt me; on which he said that he would leave me for the present, but in nine days he would return and take no denial. After this I thought I was carried to a beautiful place, where I saw an immense company of people, who appeared to be exceedingly happy. I understood it was Heaven, and felt greatly disappointed and astonished that I did not find myself happy. I was not able to join in their employments, nor could I understand the cause of their joy. While I was musing on all this, one came to me whom I supposed to be an angel. I asked him if this was Heaven? He answered yes. How does it happen, said I, that I am not happy? Because, he replied, it is not your place. He then asked me how I came there? I told him I did not know. On saying this, he conducted me to a door, which opening, I was instantly precipitated toward a most dreadful place, from which issued such doleful groans and piercing shrieks as awoke me from my sleep." Having given this account of her dream, her visitor spoke to her very seriously and advised her to consider it as a warning from God to attend to her best interests, and to prepare for death and eternity. At this the lady was offended and turned the conversation to other subjects. But the dream was verified. She died on the day in-

licated, and there seems to have been no change in the fashionable and worldly woman to indicate that the whole was not fulfilled.

The Lord has many ways of warning sinners. He warns sometimes by dreams as in the case of Pilate's wife. He warns also by sickness and the death of friends and neighbors; but more especially by the preaching of the Gospel. He is calling men to repentance, to forsake the evil way, and to become His own followers; except ye believe that I am He (Christ) ye shall die in your sins. He proclaims Himself the way, the truth and the life; He offers to all who will believe in Him the rest of peace which accompanies faith, and the rest of eternal life hereafter. He tells sinners the dangerous consequences of sin. He sets before them the day of Judgment and the reward of the wicked. Still they will continue in their sins and follies. The many persevere in their sins to the end of life and perish forever. They will not be persuaded, though Christ and His servants are warning them.

II.—The Strait Gate and Narrow Way

The narrow way leads to life, and, in Christ's day, the few only found it, and it is clear in our day that the crowds are on the broad way. The majority of mankind never heard the Gospel, and cannot but be on the broad way, and without doubt, the majority, even in Christianized countries, are on the same broad way that leads to ruin.

But there is a narrow way leading to Heaven, and sinners upon the broad way are invited to come into it, yea, are warned of their danger. Those now on the narrow way were once upon the broad way. Christ on another occasion preached on the same subject: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall

not be able.”—Luke 13: 24. In this sermon Christ gave further instruction with reference to this important subject, exhorting sinners to strive to enter in at the strait gate.

What apparently gave rise to it was a question asked by one of His hearers, as He was preaching somewhere on His way up to Jerusalem. The enquirer was anxious to know if many should be saved. Christ did not tell him whether it would be few or many, but urged upon His hearers to make sure of their own Salvation. It is not our business whether few or many will be saved. Our concern is to make sure of our own salvation.

Strive, He says, to enter in; be in earnest about it, and such as are thoroughly in earnest about entering in will enter in, provided they follow the instructions given in the word of God. He that seeketh findeth. “Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with the whole heart.”—Jer. 29:13. Christ said that many would seek to enter in and would not be able. One would be inclined, at first thought, to consider this hard, since the promises are for those that seek. But there is much half-hearted seeking. Many would rather be saved than lost; and consequently do a little seeking, but even the little is done indifferently. People may attend the house of God and yet do but very little seeking, and think they have done enough and that God is obliged to them for what they have done; they may pray in private or in public, and yet be full of self righteousness. Then they may give largely of their means for every good cause, and still not see the strait gate; they may be thinking that they are meriting Heaven in this way. Whatever is given in this way, though one would give all his substance, is only leading him away from the strait gate. Men may also suffer, even to death, for a good cause, and not be saved. Though

I give my body to be burnt, and have not the love of God, it profiteth me nothing. Besides many are seeking to go to Heaven in wrong ways; some are putting their confidence in men to save them. Roman Catholics believe that the Priest can forgive sins, and that penance and good works are the most that is required, and that the Priest will take them out of Purgatory. With these and many other minor services they think that they will qualify for Heaven, and hence they rest easy in their sins. Some are trying to qualify in various ways for Heaven. One will say, I do not swear like such a man; another will say I deal honestly with all men, and pay every one a hundred cents in the dollar; another I am charitable to the poor; another I go to church on Sabbath. There are a thousand ways and more in which men are thinking that they will be saved; but all which will end in a disappointment and condemnation. All such methods as the foregoing set Christ aside, and, instead of a reward, will only bring condemnation. Vain are the hopes the sons of men build upon their own works. Some men have another method of saving themselves; they will average things with the Lord. They will readily admit that they do some wrong things; but then they consider that they have done some good things also, and they will set the one thing over against the other, and the good will balance the evil, and all will be right at last. Then they imagine that God will pass over a good many things that were done, and will not be so exacting as men say; and that he cannot but be pleased with their good works. A greater insult cannot be given to God than to say that he will not do all he said. It is simply to call Him a liar. An irreligious man used to average his morality thus: "I am doing pretty well on the whole. I sometimes get mad and swear, but then I am strictly honest. I work on Sunday when I am particularly busy, but I give a great deal to the poor,

and I never was drunk in my life." He hired a Scotchman to build a fence around his pasture lot, and gave him special instructions to make it strong. When it was finished he said to his man. "Well, Jock, is the fence built, and is it tight and strong?" "I cannot say that it is all tight and strong," he replied, "but it is a good average fence, anyhow. If some parts of it are a little weak other parts are extra strong. I don't know but I may have left a gap here and there a yard wide or so; but then I have made up for it by doubling the number of rails on each side of the gap. I dare say the cattle will find it a good fence on the whole and will like it, though I cannot just say that it is perfect in every part."

"What!" cried the man, "Do you tell me that you have built a fence around my lot with weak places in it, and gaps in it? Why, you might as well build no fence at all. If there is one opening, or a place where an opening can be made, the cattle will be sure to find it, and all go through. Don't you know, man, that a fence must be perfect, or it is worthless?" "I used to think so said the Scotchman; but I hear you talk so much about averaging matters with the Lord, it seemed to me that we might try it with the cattle. If an average fence won't do for them, I am afraid that an average character won't do in the day of judgment."

There are many who pursue the same method with reference to their Salvation; and many of these are in christian communities. It pleases graceless hearts in this world, but will not stand them anything in the day of judgment. There are many who think they are on the narrow way when they are on the broad way. It is not a few that are deceiving themselves in this matter. All who are hoping to be saved by their own inventions, will not strive to enter in at the strait gate, but will pass it by.

The gate, or entrance to the narrow way, is Regeneration, or the New Birth. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. The Narrow Way is the Christian Life. The New Birth is not easy, but possible. Salvation is worth seeking; and men must seek for it through Christ, wait on the means of grace, and look for acceptance with God through the merits of the Divine Saviour only. Whoever looks any other way will miss the gate and fail of entrance, and must perish with the world. The gate that leads into the Kingdom of God is glorious though narrow. Those who enter the narrow gate that leads to life eternal, will finally enter the pearly gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

All who enter on the narrow way must continue in it, and it is hedged about with thorns, but not blocked up with them. If any one goes off the way, he will get wounded by the thorns. The Lord will correct His people for their follies; He will chastise them for their improvement. Then this way is followed by persecution. Christ was persecuted, so will the Godly.

Then it is also hedged about by the Divine Law. We have both the Old and the New Testament for our guidance, and we must make conscience of obeying the Commandments of God. If ye love me, keep my Commandments, said our Lord. Should one go off the way, he must return by repentance, and by correction from God. Whom he loveth, he chasteneth. We are then concerned for our spiritual comfort, for the honor of religion, and the glory of God, to keep on the narrow way. All on the narrow way will not attempt to average things with God, or attempt to excuse themselves for their failings and short comings; they will confess their sin to God, and seek forgiveness through the merits of Jesus Christ.

The longer we are on the narrow way, the better we will like it. It abounds in joyful expectations, and is the only happy way. The Godly are looking Heavenward, where there eternal home is, and where they shall reign with Christ forever and ever.

True all on the narrow way must mortify their members which are upon the earth. These consist of uncleanness, evil desires, covetousness, which is idolatry; all of which must be destroyed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Divine Grace only can accomplish this. We must put off the old man with his sinful deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge. We must put on Christ in our life and conversation. Christ's followers must be Christ-like, holy, harmless, undefiled and distinct from the world. There is a way from the sinful world to Heaven. It is a way of holiness, purity and happiness; and the unclean shall not walk in it.—(Isa. 35: Col. 3.) Flesh and blood feels mortification of lusts sore, but the spiritual man will rejoice in it, as being the way of the Lord's appointment, and the way of blessed assurance. Continuance in the narrow way requires much carefulness and prayer. There are three things that every Christian must keep constantly before him: Christ on the Cross of Calvary, our own unworthiness, and Christ our advocate at the Father's right hand. The first shows us the demerit of sin, and the love of Him who died for us; the second teaches us our sinfulness and need of grace, more grace, from day to day; the third exalts us and encourages us Heavenward; we see in Christ exalted our Saviour, our friend, and our elder brother. It is helpful to be looking at Him as He appeared to John in the midst of the golden candlesticks; looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Though the narrow way is the way of carefulness, it is the only way to Heaven and eternal felicity, and is well worth our care and vigilance. Christ is with

us on it. There is no third way to Heaven; neither is there a third place. There is Heaven and Hell only. The Roman Catholics have invented a third place, Purgatory, and in that place they maintain that souls are purged from their sins by blazing fires, and prepared for Heaven. The deliverance from this place is by a Mass celebrated by a Priest. This way of salvation is unknown to the word of God; it encourages men to live in sin, and deceives them with a false hope. Of course we may put it down as a large portion of the broad way that leads to destruction. It is the Church of Rome's method of the sanctification of souls. They abolish the work of the Holy Spirit by this awful invention. But Protestants hold space enough on the broad way.

III.—The End of Both Ways

First, we will discuss the end of the broad way, which ends in destruction; in other words, which ends in Hell. Those on the broad way enjoy themselves in this world, and are not concerned about the future. They provide not for the future, and seldom think of it, for they are taken up with the things of this world. They put death far away from them, and consider not accountability. At last come sickness and death, and when death has done his work, they open their eyes in an awful world, the place of lost souls.

One of these was the rich man who died and lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments. He had lived in great luxury, was proud and hard hearted, and all ended in a terrible eternity. This broad way sinner belonged to the wealthy class; but it is not the wealthy class alone that is wicked, for they belong to every class from kings to beggars. The wicked of every grade and condition, shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.—Ps. 9:17.

What shall it profit a man, if he should gain all the wealth and treasures of the world and lose his own soul? It shall profit him nothing.

Second, the end of the narrow way. This way ends in Heaven, the place of glorified spirits. All is well that ends well, is a true adage. Though the righteous may have many troubles here, their troubles will have an end, and will all pass away with this world, and they themselves will come into their Heavenly possessions. The homes of many of them were wretched here, and their fare often poor, but these things have passed away, and at last they arrived in the promised land. They shall henceforth hunger and thirst no more; they are now in full possession of eternal life. Their scrivings, their prayers and tears have ended in Heaven. Their sorrows, trials and sufferings they have forgotten, except so far as they are a benefit to them by reminding them of God's deliverances and mercies. They fought the good fight of faith, and laid hold upon eternal life. Pure and holy angels shall be their companions forever in their celestial home above the starry sky, and the lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead them unto fountains of living waters. Those that were guided by the Saviour's counsel, He has received into glory, where in His presence is fullness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures forever more. The reward of following Christ on earth is a glorious reward, a place in glory.

Whatever any one loses here, he has done well, if he has gained Heaven. His patience, love, and obedience have now their reward. Kind reader, look well to your eternal interests. Do not miss Heaven for the sinful world, and the pleasures of sin, which are for a season. Consider your ways, and, unless you have done so already, turn your feet to the

testimonies of the Lord. Make your peace with God now by accepting Christ for your Saviour, and following Him in the narrow way that leads to life eternal and the joys of Heaven.



Perseverance

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

Our perseverance is all of grace,
A strength from God to run our race ;
The new born man shall never fail,
Though earth and hell should him assail.

The strength he has received is Divine,
A grace that shall forever shine ;
It glory brings to God above,
And helps our faith, and hope, and love.

With many trials here we meet,
But never shall we know defeat ;
Each battle fought is a victory won,
As day by day we're marching on.

We are by power of God preserved,
Although we nothing have deserved ;
Christ will His own is safety keep,
Because He is shepherd of the sheep.

Should one upon the mountains stray,
He will pursue her all the way ;
And having found her, home will take,
And o'er her much rejoicing make.

Satan will never have to say,
I overcame them in the way;
And plucked them from their Saviour's hand,
E're they could reach the Heavenly land.

O, no, we shall triumphant be
In time and in eternity;
Our victory ascribe to Christ,
Who led us by the hand from first.

Christ will not leave us nor forsake,
But will us home to Heaven take;
Where we shall all His glory see,
And in His presence joyful be.



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